United Nations ST/AI/2000/16

Secretariat

5 December 2000

Administrative instruction

Rental subsidies and deductions

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, and for the purpose of defining the terms and conditions of rental subsidies and deductions, as part of the post adjustment system under staff rules 103.7 and 203.5, hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

1.1 The purpose of the rental subsidy scheme is to facilitate the settlement of new staff members and to encourage mobility within the common system by subsidizing the rental costs of eligible staff members whose rental accommodations are of a reasonable standard but cost significantly more than the average for the duty station.

1.2 The present instruction shall apply to staff in the Professional category and above, to Field Service staff appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules, and to project personnel appointed under the 200 series of the Staff Rules, provided they are in receipt of post adjustment. Internationally recruited General Service staff members meeting the conditions set out in section 15 of the present instruction shall also be included in the scheme.

1.3 Staff members who are included in the scheme and who, while on mission detail or temporary assignment to another duty station, continue to receive the post adjustment at their parent duty station, shall remain eligible to receive a rental subsidy for rented accommodations at the parent duty station, provided all applicable conditions are met. In such cases, the rental subsidy shall not be payable in respect of rented accommodation at the mission area duty station, or at the duty station where the staff member is on temporary assignment.

1.4 Staff members who are assigned to a new duty station with a lower post adjustment than at the duty station where they had been serving and who, under staff rule 103.7 (d) (i), continue to receive the post adjustment of the prior duty station for a maximum period of six months, shall remain eligible to receive a rental subsidy for rented accommodation at their former duty station during that period. No

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rental subsidy shall be paid for rented accommodation at the new duty station while a rental subsidy is paid for rented accommodation at the former duty station.

1.5 Part I of the present instruction defines the terms and conditions of the scheme applicable at all duty stations, unless otherwise specifically stated. Part II defines additional terms and conditions applicable at duty stations in Europe and North America listed in annex I to the information circular on rental subsidies and deductions issued by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (ST/IC/2000/90). Part III defines additional terms and conditions applicable at duty stations outside Europe and North America. For the purposes of the present instruction, duty stations in Mexico shall be included among the duty stations outside Europe and North America. Part IV defines the terms and conditions under which a rental subsidy may exceptionally be paid to internationally recruited General Service staff members.

Part I
Terms and conditions applicable at all duty stations

Section 2
Rent paid by the staff member

2.1 For the purposes of the present instruction, the expression "rent paid by the staff member" shall be the recurring amount indicated in the lease agreement which the staff member, as a tenant, agrees to pay for the right to live in the rented premises. No rental subsidy shall be paid to staff who live in their own homes or do not pay rent for their dwellings.

Sublets

2.2 Dwellings rented through a subleasing arrangement shall give rise to an entitlement to a rental subsidy provided the sublet is legal and appropriate documentation is provided by the staff member. This normally requires the prior written consent of the landlord or the appropriate legal entity.

Subsidies from other sources/sharing of rent

2.3 If the staff member receives a rental subsidy from a source other than the Organization, or shares the rent of a dwelling with someone other than the spouse or dependent children, and the lease is in the name of the staff member, the rental subsidy scheme shall apply only to that portion of the rent paid by the staff member. If the lease is not in the name of the staff member, no rental subsidy shall be paid.

One-time payment of an agent's fee

2.4 In addition to the rental subsidy for rent paid by the staff member as defined under section 2.1, a subsidy may also be paid in respect of a one-time payment fee paid to a licensed real estate agent/broker for services rendered in obtaining the dwelling for which the rental subsidy is requested. The amount of the subsidy for such a fee shall be calculated as provided in section 3.9, upon presentation of appropriate documentation by the staff member. A subsidy for the agent's fee shall be paid only once during the period of a staff member's assignment to a duty station.

Section 3
General regime governing computation of a rental subsidy

Individual threshold

3.1 The individual threshold amount is calculated by applying to the staff member's income — consisting, for the purpose of the present instruction, of the net base salary, including special post allowance, if any, and post adjustment — the rental subsidy threshold percentage rates established for each duty station by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), at the single and dependency rates. ICSC establishes such rates on the basis of the ratio that the average gross rent bears to the average net income of staff members at each duty station.

3.2 An entitlement to a rental subsidy may arise only when the amount of rent paid by the staff member exceeds the individual threshold amount, as defined in section 3.1. Staff members are expected to bear the rental costs up to that amount without subsidy.

3.3 When a staff member is married to another staff member and both meet the conditions for the payment of a rental subsidy, the following provisions shall govern:

(a) If both spouses are eligible for the payment of a rental subsidy at different duty stations, the subsidy shall be payable to each on the basis of his or her respective income;

(b) If both spouses are eligible for the payment of a rental subsidy at the same duty station, only one subsidy shall be paid. It shall be computed on the basis of the higher of the two incomes;

(c) If only one of the spouses is eligible for the payment of a rental subsidy, only the income of the eligible staff member shall be used for computation purposes.

Rent in excess of the reasonable maximum rent level

3.4 No subsidy shall be paid for the amount of the rent paid by the staff member for the amount in excess of the reasonable maximum rent level, which shall be determined in accordance with sections 11.1 to 11.3 for duty stations in Europe and North America and with sections 12.2 and 12.3 for duty stations outside Europe and North America.

Reimbursement rate

3.5 The rental subsidy shall be computed by applying the reimbursement rate, as defined by sections 11.4 and 11.5 for duty stations in Europe and North America and by section 12.4 for duty stations outside Europe and North America, to the amount by which the rent paid by the staff member or the applicable reasonable maximum rent level, whichever is lower, exceeds the individual threshold amount calculated in accordance with sections 3.1 to 3.3.

Maximum and minimum amounts of the rental subsidy

3.6 The amount of the rental subsidy shall not exceed 40 per cent of the rent paid by the staff member, or of the applicable reasonable maximum rent level, whichever is lower. However, ICSC may waive that ceiling, or establish a higher ceiling, for

specific duty stations outside Europe and North America, as further provided in section 12.5.

3.7 For eligible internationally recruited General Service staff members, the amount of the rental subsidy shall also be subject to the maximum amounts specified in section 15.3.

3.8 No rental subsidy shall be paid if the computation made in accordance with the provisions of section 3 results in a monthly amount equal to or lower than $10, or the equivalent amount in local currency.

Computation of the subsidy for an agent's fee

3.9 The subsidy for an agent's fee shall be computed as follows:

(a) When the amount of rent paid by the staff member does not exceed the amount of reasonable maximum rent level, the subsidy for an agent's fee shall be calculated by applying the reimbursement rate specified in section 3.5 to that part of the fee that exceeds the monthly individual threshold amount defined by sections 3.1 to 3.3;

(b) When the amount of rent paid by the staff member exceeds the amount of reasonable maximum rent level, the agent's fee shall be reduced in the proportion that the reasonable maximum rent level bears to the amount of rent paid by the staff member. The subsidy shall be calculated by applying the reimbursement rate specified in section 3.5 to that part of the reduced fee that exceeds the monthly individual threshold amount defined by sections 3.1 to 3.3.

Section 4
Application for a rental subsidy

4.1 Determination that a staff member is entitled to a rental subsidy and computation of the amount of that subsidy are normally made for a maximum period of 12 months at a time, upon receipt of an application by the staff member.

4.2 Staff members shall reapply annually for a rental subsidy, indicating all changes that may affect their individual situation and the amount of the rental subsidy to which they are entitled. However, the submission of a revised application for a rental subsidy shall be required before the end of the normal 12-month period, as soon as any of the following changes has occurred:

(a) Change in dwelling;

(b) Change in the rent for the same dwelling;

(c) Changes in family size.

4.3 Applications for a rental subsidy or revised applications shall be submitted in accordance with the procedures set out in the information circular on rental subsidies and deductions issued by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (ST/IC/2000/90).

Section 5
Effective date of changes in factors used in computing a rental subsidy

5.1 When there is a change in any one of the factors used in computing a rental subsidy which are accounted for automatically, i.e., changes in the staff member's income, the threshold percentage, the reasonable maximum rent level or the reimbursement rate, the resulting change in the amount of the rental subsidy shall be effective as from the date of the change in the relevant factor.

5.2 When there is a change in other factors, the effective date of the resulting change in the amount of the subsidy shall be:

(a) The effective date of the new lease when there has been a change of dwelling;

(b) The effective date of the change in rent when there has been a change in rent for the same dwelling;

(c) The date from which a new child is recognized as the staff member's dependant when there has been an increase in the number of dependent children;

(d) The anniversary date of the payment of a rental subsidy when there has been a decrease in the number of dependent children;

(e) The date of a staff member's marriage;

(f) The anniversary date of the payment of a rental subsidy when a staff member's marriage has ended, he or she has legally separated or the spouse has ceased to reside with the staff member for the major part of the year.

Section 6
Payment of a subsidy

6.1 A subsidy shall be payable from the first day of the lease agreement or from the first day following the end of the period of payment of the subsistence allowance element of the assignment grant, whichever is later. Payment shall be made on a monthly basis over a 12-month period, unless the lease expires earlier, in which case payment shall be made over the period until the end of the lease.

6.2 When the subsidy is payable for part of a month, it shall be prorated in the proportion that the partial month bears to the full calendar month.

6.3 The subsidy shall normally be paid in United States dollars. Should the staff member request payment of salary and allowances in another currency in accordance with the rules governing the currency of payment of salaries and allowances,[1] the payment of the subsidy shall be made at the United Nations operational rate of exchange prevailing on the date the payment is made. No adjustment shall be made to account for changes in exchange rates once the payment has been made.

[1] ST/AI/402 of 23 March 1995, entitled "Currency of payment of salaries and allowances", or any subsequent instruction on this subject.

Section 7
Rental deductions

7.1 Staff members who receive housing assistance, including housing provided by the Organization, a Government or a related institution, either free of charge or at rents substantially lower than the average rent used in calculating the post adjustment index for the duty station, shall normally be subject to payroll deductions from their salaries.

7.2 The amount of the rental deduction shall be equal to 80 per cent of the difference between the rent paid by the staff member and the individual rental deduction threshold, which is an amount equal to 64 per cent of the individual rental subsidy threshold amount, as defined in sections 3.1 and 3.2. The amount of the rental deduction may be reduced in accordance with section 7.3.

7.3 If dwellings provided by the Organization, a Government or a related institution are clearly below standard in terms of the certification criteria set out in the annex to the present instruction, the amount of the rental deduction may be reduced to one half of the normal rental deduction. Upon the recommendation of the designated official at the duty station, and in very exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of ICSC may authorize a waiver of the calculated amount of reduction.

7.4 For rental deduction purposes, staff members shall be required to report and certify at the time of recruitment whether they receive housing assistance or free accommodation provided by the Organization, a Government or a related institution. In accordance with staff rule 104.4 (b), staff members have the obligation to inform the Organization of any change in the situation as reported at the time of recruitment if this would have an effect on their status or entitlements. Failure to report such a change in a timely manner will result in recovery of overpaid amounts and any other appropriate action.

Section 8
Relationship with other elements of the system of salaries, allowances and other benefits

Rental subsidies and deductions have no effect on other elements of the system of salaries, allowances and grants. The rental subsidy is non-pensionable and is not taken into account in determining separation payments. A staff member's income for the purpose of determining insurance premiums and subsidies shall not be considered as affected by rental subsidies or rental deductions.

Part II
Additional terms and conditions for rental subsidy at duty stations in Europe and North America[2]

Section 9
Special eligibility requirements

A rental subsidy may be paid to eligible staff members at duty stations in Europe and North America that are listed in annex I to the information circular on rental subsidies and deductions issued by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (ST/IC/2000/90), provided they are in one of the following categories:

(a) Newcomers, i.e., newly appointed staff members and staff members transferred or reassigned from another duty station;

(b) Staff members affected by force majeure, i.e., staff members who are forced to change dwelling owing to circumstances beyond their control. The situations under which staff members may qualify for rental subsidy under force majeure shall be limited to the following:

(i) Demolition of the dwelling, extensive damage or lack of access to the dwelling owing to elements beyond the control of the staff member;

(ii) Forced eviction/repossession by the landlord through legal proceedings;

(iii) Conversion of the dwelling from rental to cooperative or condominium;

(c) Only one change in dwelling is allowed under force majeure for a staff member in the course of a continuous assignment at the same duty station. The subsidy shall be discontinued in case of any subsequent change of dwelling.

Section 10
Duration of a rental subsidy

10.1 A rental subsidy may be paid to eligible staff members at duty stations in Europe and North America for the following periods:

(a) For newcomers, seven years counted from the first day following the end of the period during which the staff member was paid the daily subsistence allowance element of the assignment grant received on arrival at the duty station. For staff members recruited at the duty station who did not receive an assignment grant on appointment, the seven-year period shall be counted from the date of the initial arrival at the duty station;

(b) In cases of force majeure, five years counted from the first day of the new lease after the occurrence of the force majeure.

10.2 A staff member may not receive a rental subsidy in the course of a continuous assignment at the same duty station in Europe or North America for a total period of

[2] As indicated in section 1.5 above, duty stations in Mexico shall be included among the duty stations outside Europe and North America for the purposes of the present instruction.

more than seven years. When a staff member in receipt of the rental subsidy as a newcomer is affected by force majeure:

(a) During the first two years following arrival at the duty station, he or she shall continue to receive the rental subsidy for a total period of seven years, at the rates for newcomers set out in column A of the table in section 11.4;

(b) After two years or more following arrival at the duty station, he or she shall receive the subsidy at the rates set out in column B of the table in section 11.4 for staff members affected by force majeure, provided however that the entire period of payment of the subsidy, either as a newcomer or under force majeure, does not exceed seven years.

Section 11
Computation of a rental subsidy at duty stations in Europe and North America

Determination of a reasonable maximum rent level

11.1 The reasonable maximum rent level referred to in section 3.4 shall be set by the Secretary-General for duty stations in Europe and North America, based on the family size of the staff member and a survey of rent levels in the local market. Levels of reasonable maximum rent for New York are set out in annex VI to the information circular on rental subsidies and deductions issued by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (ST/IC/2000/90). Local circulars are issued at other duty stations by the authorized official, setting out the reasonable maximum rent levels applicable at the duty station concerned.

11.2 For rental subsidy purposes, a staff member's family shall be considered as comprising the spouse and recognized dependants actually residing with the staff member at the duty station for the major part of the year. However, when a staff member's dependent children are absent from the duty station in connection with their studies, an additional bedroom for every two children studying away from the duty station will be added in determining the reasonable maximum rent level applicable to the staff member.

11.3 An upward adjustment of 10 per cent shall be made in the applicable reasonable maximum rent level for staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels; an upwards adjustment of 20 per cent shall be made in the applicable maximum rent level for staff at the level of Assistant Secretary-General and above.

Reimbursement rate

11.4 In accordance with section 3.4, the reimbursement rate determined on the basis of the following table shall be applied to that portion of the rent paid by the staff member that exceeds the individual rental subsidy threshold as defined in sections 3.1 and 3.2, up to the reasonable maximum rent level determined by application of sections 11.1 to 11.3.

Year	*A* *Newcomers (percentage)*	*B* *Staff members affected by force majeure (percentage)*
1	80	80
2	80	80
3	80	60
4	80	40
5	60	20
6	40	-
7	20	-

11.5 When electricity charges are included in the rent, the following amounts, or equivalent in local currency, shall be deducted from the total monthly rent payable to determine the amount of rent to be used for purposes of determining the rental subsidy: studio or one-bedroom dwelling, $25; two-bedroom dwelling, $35; three-bedroom dwelling, $45; four-bedroom dwelling, $55; and dwelling with five or more bedrooms, $65.

Maximum amount of the rental subsidy

11.6 In accordance with section 3.5, the rental subsidy paid to a staff member shall not exceed 40 per cent of the rent paid by the staff member, or 40 per cent of the applicable reasonable maximum rent level determined in accordance with sections 11.1 to 11.3, whichever is lower.

Part III
Rental subsidies and deductions at duty stations outside Europe and North America

Section 12
Computation of rental subsidy at duty stations outside Europe and North America

12.1 Except as provided in sections 13 and 14, the computation of rental subsidy at duty stations outside Europe and North America shall be governed by sections 12.2 to 12.5.

Determination of a reasonable maximum rent level

12.2 At duty stations outside Europe and North America, the reasonable rent level referred to in section 3.4 shall be established, based on the determination by the authorized official at the duty station as to whether, given the local market conditions, the rental payments are reasonable or substantially lower or higher than rents for dwellings of similar quality and size. Such determination, to be certified by the authorized official, shall be made in accordance with the criteria set out in the annex to the present instruction.

12.3 When it is determined that the rental payments are substantially higher than rents for dwellings of similar quality and size at the duty station, the amount of the subsidy shall be calculated on the basis of the highest of the rents paid by staff members with similar family circumstances for dwellings certified as reasonable at the duty station.

Reimbursement rate

12.4 The reimbursement rate for the computation of a rental subsidy at duty stations outside Europe and North America shall be 80 per cent of that portion of the rent paid by the staff member that exceeds the individual rental subsidy threshold, provided the rent paid by the staff member does not exceed the reasonable maximum rent level determined in accordance with sections 12.2 and 12.3.

Maximum amount of a rental subsidy

12.5 In accordance with section 3.6, the amount of a rental subsidy shall not exceed 40 per cent of the rent paid by the staff member, or 40 per cent of the applicable reasonable maximum rent level, whichever is lower. However, the 40 per cent ceiling may be waived or raised by ICSC for specific duty stations outside Europe and North America when commercial rents are considerably higher than the rental component of the post adjustment index.

Section 13
Modified rental subsidy at certain duty stations

At certain duty stations, where the rental threshold is based on low government-provided housing costs, a modified rental subsidy formula shall apply whereby those staff members who are obliged to pay extremely high rents on the commercial market shall be reimbursed the sum of (a) 80 per cent of the difference between the average commercial rent and the applicable individual rental threshold and (b) either 90 or 95 per cent of the difference between the rent paid by the staff member and the average commercial rent.

Section 14
Combined rent

14.1 When eligible staff members are assigned to a duty station outside the capital city of the country of assignment, their rental expenses at the duty station, if any, and the rental paid for the family's accommodation at another location in the country of assignment may be considered as a single rent for the purposes of the rental subsidy, subject to the following conditions:

(a) In the opinion of the Secretary-General, the duty station lacks schools and/or medical facilities appropriate to the needs of the staff member's family;

(b) The staff member's family has travelled at the expense of the Organization to the country of the duty station and settled in the capital city or another city in the country of assignment with appropriate educational and/or medical facilities;

(c) The staff member is obliged to rent accommodation at both locations.

14.2 The combined rent mechanism under section 14.1 shall not apply in the following situations:

(a) When the staff member's family is left in the home country or in a third country, or

(b) When the staff member's family is settled at locations in the country of assignment other than the staff member's duty station for reasons not related to the education or health care of the family members.

In such cases, a rental subsidy shall be paid only in respect of accommodation rented by the staff member at the duty station.

Part IV
Additional terms and conditions applicable to internationally recruited General Service staff members

Section 15
Rental subsidy for internationally recruited General Service staff

15.1 In accordance with the changes introduced in 1983 in the non-resident's allowance, internationally recruited General Service staff serving at duty stations in Europe and the Americas shall be eligible for a rental subsidy when the following conditions are met:

(a) They do not receive a non-resident's allowance under the transitional measures established in staff rule 103.5 (d) for staff in receipt of such an allowance on 31 August 1983;

(b) Their nationality, within the meaning of staff rule 104.8, is other than that of the country of the duty station, and they do not have permanent resident status in that country.

15.2 Except as provided in section 15.3, the terms and conditions for the payment of a rental subsidy to eligible internationally recruited General Service staff members shall be those set out in parts I and II of the present instruction for staff members in Europe and North America.

15.3 The amount of rental subsidy may not exceed $200 per month for staff members without a dependent spouse or child and $250 per month for staff members with such a dependant.

Section 16
Final provisions

16.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2001.

16.2 The following administrative instructions are hereby abolished:

(a) ST/AI/275/Rev.2 of 23 November 1988;

(b) ST/AI/314 of 27 January 1984 and ST/AI/314/Add.1 of 16 January 1985;

(c) ST/AI/350 of 27 April 1988, ST/AI/350/Amend.2 of 6 February 1992 and ST/AI/350/Amend.3 of 23 May 1996.

(*Signed*) Joseph. E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Annex

Certification criteria for purposes of determining the reasonable maximum rent level at duty stations outside Europe and North America (sections 12.2 and 12.3 of the instruction)

For the purpose of certification, at each duty station dwellings are grouped in three categories, as follows:

A. Reasonable

If a dwelling occupied by a staff member is similar in quality and size by reference to those occupied by other staff members at the same duty station having similar family circumstances and if the rental follows a general pattern of rents for dwellings of similar quality and size, then the dwelling in question should be certified as "reasonable". It must be noted, however, that if a staff member has no alternative but to occupy a dwelling that is larger or better in quality in relation to those occupied by other staff members with similar family circumstances or if the rent is very high in comparison to other dwellings of similar size because of unavailability of other suitable accommodations, then the dwelling must still be certified as "reasonable".

B. Above average

If a staff member occupies a dwelling that is substantially larger or better in quality in relation to those occupied by other staff members with similar family circumstances, resulting in higher rental payments, then the dwelling should be certified as "above average". In this case, the highest rent paid by a staff member from among those with similar family circumstances and living in dwellings certified as "reasonable" must be used for the calculation of rental subsidies.

C. Substandard

Dwellings provided either free of charge or at a nominal cost which are of poor quality fall within this category. Judging from past experience, dwellings of this type lack either the minimum acceptable standard of construction and/or one or more of the basic amenities. It should be noted that the category "substandard" applies also to dwellings in capital or other major cities.

United Nations ST/AI/2000/17

Secretariat

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Administrative instruction

Assignment grant

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1 and for the purpose of implementing the provisions of staff rules 107.20 and 203.10, hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the assignment grant (the "grant") is to provide staff members with a reasonable cash amount for relocation on initial appointment, assignment or transfer to a duty station. It is the total compensation payable by the Organization for costs incurred by the staff member and his/her family members as a result of an appointment, assignment or transfer involving relocation, as well as any pre-departure expenses that the staff member may incur as a result.

Elements

1.2 The grant consists of:

(a) A daily subsistence allowance (DSA) portion, payable in accordance with section 2; and

(b) A lump-sum portion, payable in accordance with section 3.

The conditions of payment of each portion of the grant are summarized in annex I to the present instruction.

Eligibility

1.3 Staff in the Professional and higher categories, Field Service staff, internationally recruited General Service staff appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules and project personnel appointed under the 200 series of the Staff Rules shall be eligible for payment of the grant, provided they meet the requirements set out in the present instruction. The grant, however, shall not be payable in connection with appointment or assignment to a special mission.

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1.4 An eligible staff member shall normally be entitled to payment of the grant when he or she has been authorized to proceed on travel involving relocation on initial appointment, assignment or transfer, and when the period of service at the new duty station is expected to be for at least one year.

1.5 The grant shall not be paid to a staff member recruited from the area within commuting distance of the duty station unless he or she demonstrates that it was necessary to change accommodation as a direct consequence of the appointment, for instance after moving out of a house formerly provided by his or her Government. Other accommodation changes within the area of commuting distance, and promotion or conversion to the Professional category at the same duty station, shall not give rise to payment of the grant.

1.6 When the appointment or assignment to a new duty station is for less than one year and the Secretary-General, under staff rule 103.7 (d) (ii) or staff rule 203.9 (d), has decided to apply the post adjustment applicable to the duty station and related entitlements such as the assignment grant, the grant shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of section 6.2.

1.7 The grant shall be paid to eligible staff who are assigned or transferred from one duty station to another within the same country, provided the assignment or transfer necessitates a change of accommodation.

Categories of duty stations

1.8 The amount of the grant may vary depending upon the classification of the duty station to which a staff member is appointed or assigned, as shown in annex I to the present instruction. All duty stations are placed by the International Civil Service Commission in one of six categories of duty stations, i.e., H and A to E. The H category comprises headquarters duty stations and other duty stations having similar conditions of life and work. The A to E categories comprise all other duty stations, classified by order of difficulty of conditions of life and work. Staff are informed of the category of their duty station by an annual information circular which may be amended in the course of the year owing to a change in classification.

Spouses who are both staff members

1.9 When a staff member is married to another staff member or to a staff member of another organization of the United Nations common system, payment of the grant to one or both spouses shall be governed by section 4.

Section 2
DSA portion

2.1 The DSA portion shall normally consist of subsistence allowance for 30 days at the daily rate applicable at the duty station in respect of the staff member and at half such daily rate in respect of each family member for whom the staff member had an entitlement to travel expenses to the duty station at the time of initial appointment, assignment or transfer to the duty station, and for whom such travel expenses have been paid by the Organization.

2.2 At duty stations other than those classified in the H category, the normal 30-day period may be extended up to a maximum of 90 days, in accordance with staff rules 107.20 (c) (ii) and 203.10 (c).

DSA portion in respect of eligible family members

2.3 Entitlement to the DSA portion of the grant in respect of any eligible family member shall arise when the following conditions are met:

(a) The family member travels at United Nations expense, in compliance with the rules governing official travel of family members, and

(b) The family member arrives at the duty station at least six months prior to the date on which the staff member's service at the duty station is expected to end. This requirement may be waived in respect of dependent children attending an educational institution outside the duty station.

Computation and currency of payment

2.4 The DSA portion of the grant at each duty station shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of the administrative instruction on the system of daily subsistence allowance,[1] subject to the following adjustments:

(a) When a special DSA rate has been established for specified hotel(s) at a particular location, the special rate shall be payable only upon provision of a certification from the senior administrative officer concerned that the staff member or an eligible family member had no alternative but to stay for a number of days at that specified hotel, and upon presentation of receipted hotel bills. The remainder of the DSA portion of the grant shall be calculated on the basis of the regular DSA rate for the duty station;

(b) When the normal 30-day period has been exceptionally extended in accordance with section 2.2, the DSA portion of the grant for the period of the extension may not exceed 60 per cent of the applicable DSA rate.

2.5 The DSA portion of the grant shall normally be paid in United States dollars, subject to the rules governing currency of payment of salaries and allowances.[2]

Section 3
Lump-sum portion

3.1 Entitlement to the lump-sum portion of the grant and its amount depend on the ICSC classification of the duty station according to conditions of life and work, the duration of the assignment, and the existence of an entitlement to payment of removal costs of personal effects and household goods under staff rule 107.27 ("removal entitlement").

Category H duty station

3.2 A staff member who is appointed or assigned to a category H duty station shall receive a lump-sum payment of one month's emoluments, as defined in sections 3.6

[1] ST/AI/1998/3 of 23 January 1998, entitled "System of daily subsistence allowance".
[2] ST/AI/402 of 23 March 1995, entitled "Currency of payment of salaries and allowances".

and 3.7, provided that he or she does not have a removal entitlement to that duty station.[3]

3.3 The lump-sum portion of the grant shall not be payable to locally recruited staff members who return to their parent duty station after an assignment to an established mission during which they were temporarily converted to the Field Service category.

Category A to E duty stations

3.4 A staff member who is appointed or reassigned for one year or longer to a category A to E duty station, and has a removal entitlement, shall receive a lump-sum payment of one month's emoluments, as defined in sections 3.6 and 3.7.

3.5 A staff member who is appointed or reassigned for one year or longer to a category A to E duty station, and does not have a removal entitlement, shall receive a lump-sum payment equivalent to:

(a) One month's emoluments if the duration of the assignment is expected to be of one year or longer but less than three years; or

(b) Two months' emoluments if the assignment is expected to be for three years or longer.

Computation

3.6 For staff in the Professional and higher categories, Field Service staff and project personnel, the emoluments used for computation of the lump-sum portion of the grant shall consist of the staff member's net base salary and post adjustment at the duty station of appointment or assignment, at his or her grade and step on the date of appointment or reassignment. Eligible staff members with recognized dependants shall receive a lump sum based on the emoluments at the dependency rate, whether or not the dependants travel to the duty station.

3.7 For internationally recruited General Service staff, the emoluments used for computation of the lump-sum portion of the grant shall be calculated as follows:

(a) For staff members without recognized dependants, the lump-sum portion shall be determined on the basis of the net base salary at the grade and step of the staff member on the date of appointment or assignment, plus language allowance, if any;

(b) For staff members who are entitled to payment of a dependency allowance for a dependent spouse, the monthly amount of the allowance applicable at the duty station of appointment or reassignment shall be included in the computation of the lump-sum portion. If no dependency allowance is payable for the spouse, the monthly amount of the dependency allowance payable in respect of the first dependent child shall be included in the computation.

3.8 If an assignment of less than three years is extended to three years or longer, the second lump-sum payment shall be computed on the basis of the staff member's emoluments at the time the payment falls due.

[3] At category H duty stations, removal entitlement is normally paid in the case of assignment for a period of two years or longer, as provided by section 4.2 of ST/AI/2000/2 of 10 March 2000, entitled "Mobility and hardship allowance".

Currency of payment

3.9 The lump-sum portion of the grant shall normally be paid in United States dollars, subject to the rules governing currency of payment of salaries and allowances.[3]

Section 4
Special conditions applicable when husband and wife are staff members

4.1 When a staff member is married to another staff member or to a staff member of another organization of the United Nations common system and each spouse travels on appointment, transfer or assignment at the expense of the Organization to the same duty station:

(a) Each staff member shall receive the DSA portion of the grant for himself or herself, computed in accordance with section 2;

(b) The DSA portion in respect of dependent children travelling to the duty station shall be paid to the staff member on whom they are recognized as being dependent;

(c) Only one lump sum shall be paid, normally to the higher graded spouse and on the basis of his or her emoluments.

4.2 When both spouses travel on appointment, transfer or assignment at the expense of the Organization to different duty stations:

(a) Each staff member shall receive the DSA portion of the grant for himself or herself, computed in accordance with section 2;

(b) The DSA portion in respect of dependent children travelling to one of the duty stations where their parents are assigned shall normally be paid to the parent on whom they are recognized as being dependent, unless the child accompanies the other parent and both staff members request that the DSA portion be paid to that other parent;

(c) Each staff member shall receive the lump-sum portion applicable to his or her situation, in accordance with section 3.

Section 5
Timing of payment of the grant

5.1 The DSA portion of the grant in respect of the staff member and the lump-sum portion are normally payable on commencement of duties at the duty station, or on the date of conversion to an appointment giving rise to payment of the grant.

5.2 The DSA portion of the grant in respect of eligible family members is payable on the actual date of arrival of each family member at the duty station.

Advance against lump-sum portion

5.3 An advance of 80 per cent of the lump-sum portion of the grant, as computed at the time the advance payment is made, may be paid up to three months in advance of travel of a staff member assigned or transferred to a new duty station.

5.4 No advance against the lump-sum portion may be made in the case of initial appointments.

5.5 When an advance is paid, the releasing office shall so notify the receiving office, which shall make the necessary adjustments upon the staff member's arrival at the new duty station.

Section 6
Adjustment/recovery

Return to the same duty station

6.1 When a change of official duty station or a new appointment involves a return to a place at which the staff member was previously stationed, and where an assignment grant had been paid, the full amount of the grant shall be paid only when the staff member has been absent from that place for at least one year. In the case of a shorter absence, the amount payable shall be that proportion of the full grant that the completed months of absence bear to 12 months.

Appointment or assignment of less than one year

6.2 When the appointment or assignment to a new duty station is for less than one year and the Secretary-General has decided to pay post adjustment and related entitlements, including assignment grant, as provided in section 1.6:

(a) The DSA portion of the grant shall be paid in full;

(b) The lump-sum portion, where payable in accordance with section 3, shall be prorated in the proportion that the number of months of appointment bears to 12 months.

Should the appointment or assignment be subsequently extended to one year or longer at the same duty station, the staff member shall receive the balance of the lump-sum portion which would have been paid had the initial appointment been for one year or longer.

6.3 When the appointment or assignment to a new duty station is for less than one year with initial payment of subsistence allowance, and the decision is subsequently taken to extend the service of the staff member at the same duty station and to pay the staff member post adjustment and related entitlements as provided in section 1.6 instead of subsistence allowance, the staff member shall be entitled to payment of the grant (both DSA and lump-sum portion, where applicable) at the time of the decision provided the following conditions are met:

(a) The total expected period of service at the duty station, both while receiving subsistence allowance and afterwards, is at least 12 months;

(b) The extension occurs at least six months prior to the expected end of the assignment at the duty station.

However, when subsistence allowance has been paid for six months or longer prior to the extension of the appointment, the staff member shall not be entitled to the DSA portion of the grant, but only to the lump-sum portion, where payable in accordance with section 3.

Reduction in period of service at the duty station

6.4 The DSA portion of the grant paid on arrival at the duty station shall normally not be recoverable.

6.5 The lump-sum portion of the grant shall be adjusted or recovered as follows when the staff member has not completed the period of service in respect of which the lump-sum portion of the assignment grant has been paid:

(a) When a one-month lump sum has been paid and the completed period of service at the duty station is less than one year, the lump-sum portion of the grant shall be prorated and recovered or adjusted in the proportion that the period of service at the duty station bears to one year. No recovery shall be made if the staff member completes his/her first year of service at the duty station.

(b) When a two-month lump sum has been paid and the completed period of service at the duty station is less than three years, the lump sum shall be adjusted/recovered as follows:

(i) If the completed period of service at the duty station is less than one year, the first month's lump sum shall be prorated and recovered/adjusted in the proportion that the period of service bears to the first year (12 months) of assignment. The second month's lump sum shall be recovered in full;

(ii) If the completed period of service at the duty station is one year or more but less than two years, there shall be no recovery in respect of the first month's lump sum, but the second month's lump sum shall be recovered in full;

(iii) If the completed period of service at the duty station is more than two years but less than three years, there shall be no recovery in respect of the first month's lump sum, but the second month's lump sum shall be prorated and recovered/adjusted in the proportion that the completed period of service in the third year of assignment (i.e., the period exceeding 24 months) bears to the third year (12 months) of assignment;

(iv) If the completed period of service at the duty station is three years or more, the lump sum shall not be recovered/adjusted.

The provisions of this section are summarized in annex II to the present instruction.

6.6 The Secretary-General may grant an exception to the provisions of section 6.5 for compelling and/or compassionate reasons (e.g., health, reduction of the duration of assignment at the direction of the Organization or for other reasons beyond the control of the staff member).

Section 7
Final provisions

7.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2001.

7.2 Administrative instructions ST/AI/364, ST/AI/364/Add.1 and ST/AI/364/Add.2 are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Annex I

Summary of the payment of the assignment grant by category of duty stations

DSA portion

	Category A-E duty stations	*Category H duty stations*
For both removal and non-removal cases	30 days' DSA plus 30 days' DSA at half the DSA rate for each eligible family member for whom travel has been paid by the Organization	30 days' DSA plus 30 days' DSA at half the DSA rate for each eligible family member for whom travel has been paid by the Organization

Plus
Lump-sum portion

	Category A-E duty stations	*Category H duty stations*
For non-removal cases only	One month's lump sum, for assignments of one year or more, but less than three years	One month's lump sum
	Two months' lump sum, for assignments that are expected to be of a duration of three years or more	—
	If an assignment of less than three years' duration is subsequently extended to three years or more, a second one-month lump sum is payable at the beginning of the third year	—
For removal cases only	One month's lump sum	No lump sum

Annex II

Summary of arrangements for recovery/adjustment of advance payment of assignment grant due to reduction in period of service to the duty station

Amount of lump sum paid	*Period of completed service*	*Recovery adjustment*
One month	Less than one year	On a 1-to-12 basis
One month	One year or more but less than two years	No recovery
Two months	Less than one year	On a 1-to-12 basis in respect of the first month and full recovery of the second month
Two months	One year or more but less than two years	No recovery in respect of the first month but full recovery of the second month
Two months	More than two years but less than three years	No recovery in respect of the first month and prorated recovery of the second month on a 1-to-12 basis

United Nations ST/AI/2000/18

Secretariat

21 December 2000

Administrative instruction

Life insurance*

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1 and for the purpose of defining the conditions governing the provision of life insurance coverage under staff regulation 6.2, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General

1.1 A group life insurance plan ("plan") is offered as a part of the scheme of social security for the staff which the Secretary-General is required to establish under staff regulation 6.2. The underwriter of the plan is the Aetna Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut, United States of America ("insurance company"). The policyholder is the United Nations.

1.2 The plan is financed solely from the contributions of participating staff members. No subsidy is paid by the Organization.

1.3 Participation in the plan is voluntary for all staff. A staff member may withdraw from the plan at any time. The plan provides term insurance coverage only, and has no cash value at the time of withdrawal.

Section 2
Eligibility and enrolment in the plan

2.1 All staff members who receive a letter of appointment for six months or more will be eligible to participate in the plan.

2.2 Enrolment in the plan is automatic for eligible staff members who apply for life insurance coverage under the plan, on the appropriate form, within 60 days of signing the qualifying letter of appointment. They will be covered from the effective date of the letter of appointment.

* *Personnel Manual* index No. 6220.

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2.3 Enrolment in the plan for eligible staff members who apply more than 60 days after signing the qualifying letter of appointment is conditional on the provision by the staff member at the time of application, on a special form for the purpose, of evidence of insurability satisfactory to the insurance company.

2.4 The insurance company, which reserves the right to reject any application by a staff member who applies after 60 days, may require the applicant to undergo a medical examination at the applicant's own expense. Such staff members, whose applications are accepted, will be covered from the date on which the insurance company gives its written consent.

Section 3
Benefits and premiums

3.1 The insurance coverage for eligible staff members consists of:

(a) A principal sum, payable in the event of death from any cause at any time or place; and

(b) An additional sum, payable in the event of accidental death or dismemberment, subject to certain conditions.

3.2 The benefits and principal provisions of the policy will be described more fully in an information circular.

3.3 The premiums and the benefits will be expressed in United States dollars. The premiums and benefits are receivable and payable by the insurance company in that currency.

3.4 The premiums for the plan shall be paid in full by the staff member participating in the plan. The premiums shall be paid by monthly payroll deduction.

3.5 The premium rate is determined by the insurance company, in consultation with the Organization. The premiums for different levels of life insurance coverage will be announced periodically in an information circular.

Section 4
Level of coverage and premiums

Staff under 62 years of age who enrol in the plan

4.1 The level of coverage, and the corresponding premium, for staff members under 62 years of age who enrol in the plan is based on the staff member's pensionable remuneration, subject to a maximum.

4.2 The maximum coverage is reduced for all such participants who continue in service after the month in which they reach age 62.

Staff enrolling at 62 years of age or older

4.3 The level of coverage, and the corresponding premium, for staff members enrolling at 62 years of age or older is limited to a fixed sum.

Staff paid in currencies other than United States dollars

4.4 The level of coverage, and the corresponding premium, for staff members at duty stations away from Headquarters who are paid in currencies other than United States dollars is based on their pensionable remuneration in the local currency, converted to United States dollars using the United Nations official rate of exchange.

4.5 The premiums payable by such staff members are remitted to the insurance company in United States dollars.

4.6 Benefits payable by the insurance company will be the equivalent in United States dollars, converted at the United Nations official rate of exchange at the time of payment, of the entitlement of the participant in local currency.

Section 5
Adjustment of coverage level

5.1 The level of coverage and the corresponding premium for each participating staff member may be automatically adjusted periodically to take into account changes in the pensionable remuneration of the staff member, unless:

(a) The pensionable remuneration of the staff member already entitles him or her to the maximum coverage available; or

(b) The staff member has executed a waiver of automatic increase prior to the date on which the present instruction enters into force.

5.2 A participant not wishing to have the increased life insurance coverage afforded by the requisite increase in pensionable remuneration must cancel his or her coverage under the plan. The option to waive the coverage increase and freeze the life insurance at the prior level shall no longer be available.

Section 6
Reapplication after cancellation of coverage

6.1 A staff member who has cancelled coverage may reapply at a later date for coverage based on his or her pensionable remuneration at that time. Enrolment in the plan at that level is conditional on the provision by the staff member at the time of application, on a special form for the purpose, of evidence of insurability satisfactory to the insurance company.

6.2 The insurance company, which reserves the right to reject any such application, may require the applicant to undergo a medical examination at the applicant's own expense. Staff members whose applications are accepted shall be covered, at the level warranted by their pensionable remuneration, from the date on which the insurance company gives its written consent.

Section 7
Designation of beneficiaries

7.1 Since life insurance benefits are payable to the participant's beneficiary or beneficiaries, it is most important for each participant in the plan to designate the person or persons to whom the participant wishes the benefit to be paid. Special forms are available for the designation of beneficiaries.

7.2 Only the most recent, properly executed form for the designation of beneficiaries is recognized by the insurance company for the payment of benefits. It is the responsibility of the staff member or former staff member to make sure that the proper person or persons are designated, particularly after death, divorce or other change in the relationship between the person or persons previously designated and the staff member or former staff member.

7.3 Changes in the designation of beneficiaries may be made at any time.

Section 8
Special leave

Staff members who are granted special leave on partial pay or without pay may continue to participate in the plan by paying the premium in advance.

Section 9
Free life insurance coverage after separation from service

9.1 Participants in the plan who at the time of separation from service have participated in the plan for at least 10 years continue to receive life insurance coverage under certain conditions, which are set out below, without further payment of premiums. The additional coverage for accidental death or dismemberment, however, ceases after separation from service.

Staff under 55 years of age who separate from service

9.2 Participants who separate from service prior to the age of 55 receive one year's free life insurance coverage, at the level of their coverage on the date of separation, for each completed 10-year period of contributory participation.

9.3 At the end of this period of free coverage, the life insurance coverage ceases unless the participant:

(a) Again becomes a staff member and renews his or her participation in the plan, if eligible; or

(b) Makes arrangements with the insurance company to continue coverage under the conversion privilege (see sect. 10 below).

Staff who separate from service at 55 years of age or older

9.4 Participants who separate from service at the age of 55 or older receive free life insurance coverage equal to a percentage of their coverage on the date of separation. The percentage is reduced as the participant grows older, subject to a minimum and a maximum.

Staff whose appointments are terminated for reasons of health

9.5 Participants in the plan whose appointments are terminated for reasons of health in accordance with staff regulation 9.1 (a), but before attaining the age of 62 years, continue to receive life insurance coverage equal to their coverage on the date of separation, without further payment of premiums. The additional coverage for accidental death or dismemberment, however, ceases at that time.

Free life insurance coverage for those who have signed a waiver

9.6 In the case of a participant, who, having signed a waiver of automatic increase in coverage prior to the date on which the present instruction enters into force, was not insured for the full amount to which he or she was entitled, the free life insurance coverage will be based on the level of coverage on the date of separation from service.

Section 10
Conversion privilege

10.1 All staff members who, at the time of their separation from service, are participating in the plan may make arrangements through the Organization to convert to an individual policy under conditions established by the insurance company, without having to produce further evidence of insurability.

10.2 The participant is then solely responsible for paying and remitting the premiums to the insurance company.

Section 11
Final provisions

11.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2001.

11.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/1998/10 of 12 November 1998, entitled "Life insurance", is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

United Nations ST/AI/2000/19

Secretariat

18 December 2000

Administrative instruction

Visa status of non-United States staff members serving in the United States, members of their household and their household employees, and staff members seeking or holding permanent resident status in the United States

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to paragraph 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, hereby promulgates the following rules regarding United States G-4 and G-5 visas:

Section 1
Eligibility for international organization G-4 visa status

1.1 The G-4 visa status is a non-immigrant status granted to officials of, or persons employed by, international organizations while stationed on official business in the United States, as well as to members of their immediate families. Staff members other than United States citizens and permanent residents whose duty station is in the United States and who are considered international recruits in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules (e.g., staff in the Professional category and above, Field Service staff and staff in the General Service category who were internationally recruited under staff rule 104.7) are required by the United States to obtain G-4 visa status on appointment and to relinquish any other visa status in the United States that they held previously. Locally recruited staff who are not United States citizens or permanent residents may also be eligible for G-4 visa status depending on the circumstances surrounding their presence in the United States.

1.2 A staff member's spouse and unmarried dependent children under the age of 21 and those entitled to education grant are automatically considered eligible for G-4 visa status.

1.3 Other relatives may be eligible for G-4 visa status upon demonstrating close ties and a continuing dependency and residential relationship with the staff member. Their purpose in seeking entry into the United States must be to reside with the staff member. Applications by staff members for G-4 visas in respect of family members other than spouses and children under 21 years of age shall be submitted for review to the Visa Committee, which may request additional information or clarification. After such review, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management shall decide whether the request should be endorsed and submitted to

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the United States authorities. Staff members shall be informed promptly of the outcome of the review.

1.4 Staff members who at recruitment for Professional or higher posts are permanent residents in, but not citizens of, the United States must apply for a change to G-4 visa status unless they are exceptionally authorized to retain permanent resident status in accordance with section 5.7 below.

Section 2
Expiration of G-4 visa status

A staff member's authorized stay in the United States expires automatically upon separation from service (which, for the purposes of the present instruction, includes entry into special leave with or without pay) or transfer to a duty station outside the United States, even if the G-4 visa stamped in the passport indicates that it is valid beyond the separation or transfer date. In practice, the United States authorities allow staff members and their families 30 days after the date of separation or transfer in which to leave the country. If additional time is required, an application must be made in writing to the United States authorities for an additional 30-day period or for assistance in seeking a change of visa status from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Section 3
Cancellation of G-4 visa status

3.1 G-4 visas issued to United Nations staff and their family members are cancelled without prejudice when staff members are no longer eligible for the G-4 visa upon separation from service or transfer to a duty station outside the United States.

3.2 Staff members holding a G-4 visa who are due to separate from the Organization or to transfer to another duty station (other than for a limited-term assignment to a non-family mission or a posting that does not involve a change of duty station) must present their passport to the United States Mission, together with the passports of their family members holding derivative G-4 visas, for the cancellation of such visas without prejudice. This must be done as soon as the date of their separation or transfer is known, and in any case at least one week prior to such date. Alternatively, within the same time limits, passports can be submitted to the Travel and Transportation Service for appropriate processing. If such visas were processed by the United Nations Visa Committee, copies of cancelled documents shall be submitted to that Committee as well.

3.3 Staff members who are divorced from their spouse must submit a letter by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the spouse and her or his attorney advising the spouse of the obligation to surrender the G-4 visa and the G-4 visas of any children residing with the spouse within 30 days and attaching a copy of the present instruction. The staff member must send a copy of that letter to the United Nations Visa Committee no later than 30 days after the divorce is in effect. In addition, the staff member is required to inform the Visa Committee whether the family member(s) will be repatriated or seeking a change in visa status from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Section 4
Employment within the United States for family members with derivative G-4 visas

4.1 Spouses and dependent children of staff members with G-4 visa status who wish to work in the United States are required to secure permission from the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service through the United States Mission. Permission must be obtained before the employment commences and may be granted and renewed for periods of up to three years. Permission must be renewed upon each change of employment. Income and social security taxes must be paid on non-United Nations emoluments earned in the United States.

4.2 In general, employment is authorized within certain limitations for spouses and dependent children. Employment is not authorized for other relatives on derivative G-4 visas. Limitations generally do not apply to unmarried children who are full-time students working part-time during the academic year or full-time during the school holidays. Dependent children over 23 years old with G-4 visa status will not be given permission to work in the host country unless they are disabled and incapable of living independently.

Section 5
United States permanent resident status

5.1 Pursuant to staff rule 104.4 (c), staff members intending to acquire permanent resident status in any country other than that of their nationality or who intend to change their nationality must notify the Secretary-General of that intention before the change in resident status or in nationality becomes final. Such staff members should inform the Office of Human Resources Management in writing prior to making their application for permanent resident status or naturalization, as the case may be.

5.2 In accordance with United States law, a permanent resident of the United States who is a United Nations staff member may not continue to hold permanent resident status unless within a period of 10 days she or he signs a waiver of the rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities which would accrue to him or her as a staff member of the United Nations.

5.3 Before they become United States permanent residents, staff members shall be required by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service to sign the waiver of rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities referred to in section 5.2 above. Such staff members must first request permission to sign the waiver. If such permission is granted and an alien registration card is issued to the staff member, she or he must take it to the Office of Human Resources Management to be recorded. Such staff members must also inform the office as soon as possible in writing of the date of the signature of the waiver.

5.4 The signing of the waiver by staff members who are already in permanent resident status or acquired it after entry on duty places them in a position of parity with staff members of United States nationality with respect to their United Nations status. While such staff members retain full functional immunities for actions taken in the course of official business, they are otherwise subject to United States laws, including those regarding taxation, payment of customs duties, etc. These staff members become liable for payment of United States taxes on emoluments earned

from the United Nations as of the date of the signing of the waiver. Such taxes are subject to reimbursement to staff who have been authorized to sign the waiver pursuant to staff regulation 3.3 (f) and the tax reimbursement administrative instruction.

5.5 Staff members who sign the waiver in order to acquire permanent resident status lose any entitlements they would otherwise have had to international benefits under the Staff Rules by virtue of serving at a duty station outside the country of their nationality (i.e., home leave, education grant, repatriation grant), but only from the date on which they are granted permanent resident status as shown on their alien registration card and not from the date on which they sign the waiver.

5.6 Subject to this section, staff members who have permanent resident status in the United States are required to renounce such status and to change to G-4 visa status upon appointment and staff members who seek to change to permanent resident status will not be granted permission to sign the waiver of rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities required by the United States Government for the acquisition or retention of permanent resident status.

5.7 The rule in section 5.6 above does not apply to the following:

(a) Stateless persons;

(b) Newly appointed staff members who have applied for citizenship by naturalization, when such citizenship will be granted imminently;

(c) General Service and related categories staff previously authorized to retain permanent resident status, on promotion to the Professional category;

(d) Staff members in the General Service and related categories;

(e) Staff members appointed to serve outside the United States either under the 200 series of the Staff Rules as technical assistance project personnel, or under an appointment of limited duration governed by the 300 series of the Staff Rules;

(f) Staff members appointed for less than one year; however if their appointments are extended beyond one year, that extension is subject to obtaining a G-4 visa.

The authority to grant the above exceptions is reserved to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. These exceptions apply to all staff members seeking to acquire permanent resident status in the United States, including those serving in offices away from Headquarters.

5.8 Locally recruited staff members in the General Service and related categories holding permanent resident status in the United States at the time of appointment and wishing to retain this status must produce their alien registration card to the Office of Human Resources Management on the day they report for duty.

5.9 Locally recruited staff members in the General Service and related categories seeking to acquire permanent resident status after appointment must advise the Office of Human Resources Management in writing prior to making their application.

Section 6
G-5 visas for household employees

6.1 G-5 visa status may be granted to household employees of staff members holding G-4 visas. Staff members employing household help under a G-5 visa are responsible for compliance with the laws and regulations applicable to employment contracts in the United States and in the state in which they reside.

6.2 The household employee must not be related to the staff member or his or her spouse or to another staff member, shall have previous experience in domestic service and must come from the same cultural background as the staff member or have several years of documented domestic service in the staff member's household. A G-5 visa cannot be used for any other purpose within the United States non-immigrant visa categories (e.g., study, business, tourism or other employment purposes).

6.3 Staff members whose application for a G-5 visa for a household employee has been approved by the United States authorities shall maintain the following records for the duration of actual employment and for three years thereafter:

(a) The employee's full name, date and place of birth, gender and occupation;

(b) The employee's home address and telephone number in the United States;

(c) A record of the number of hours worked daily and weekly;

(d) A copy of a cheque, money order or dated receipt covering each pay period, including a record of any deduction made;

(e) A record of all social security payments made for the employee;

(f) A record of all health insurance payments made for the employee.

Section 7
Application for G-5 visas

7.1 Staff members must submit to the United States authorities an application for a G-5 visa for a household employee, including a copy of the employment contract, which satisfies all the conditions defined for that purpose by the United States authorities. Those conditions shall be specified in information circulars issued to inform staff of the applicable requirements and of any subsequent changes. Applications for a G-5 visa must first be reviewed by the United Nations Visa Committee, which makes recommendations for endorsement of such applications to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. Staff members shall be informed promptly of the outcome of the review.

7.2 If the United States authorities grant a G-5 visa, the staff member shall immediately report the arrival of the household employee to the United Nations Visa Committee and to the Travel and Transportation Service, Office of Central Support Services, and submit at the same time a copy of the signed contract of employment.

7.3 In the event the household employee ceases to be employed by the staff member, but is to be employed by another staff member, both staff members must inform the United Nations Visa Committee in writing of such change of employer. The new employer of the household employee must submit an application for a G-5

visa for that household employee to the United States authorities, after review and recommendation by the United Nations Visa Committee. Once the application has been approved, the new employer will assume all responsibilities in relation to such employment, including the responsibility to repatriate the household employee at the conclusion of the employment indicated in section 8.3 below. Pending or failing such approval, the responsibility to repatriate the household employee rests with the original employer.

Section 8
Cancellation of G-5 visas

8.1 G-5 visas issued to household employees of staff members are cancelled without prejudice when the staff members are no longer eligible for the G-4 visa, upon separation from service, transfer to a duty station outside the United States or change of staff member's visa status.

8.2 In the event of a change of the staff member's G-4 visa status, or termination of the household employment, the staff member concerned shall submit the passport of the household employee holding the G-5 visa for cancellation of the G-5 visa and the I-94 form (permission to stay, arrival-departure record) to the United States Mission. Passports must be presented at least one week before the above change of status. Alternatively, within the same time limits, passports can be submitted to the Travel and Transportation Service for appropriate processing. Copies of cancelled documents shall be submitted to the United Nations Visa Committee.

8.3 Upon cancellation of the G-5 visa, the staff member must make arrangements for the repatriation of the household employee and provide to the United Nations Visa Committee proof of repatriation.

Section 9
I-94 form — permission to stay for G-5 visa holders

9.1 The I-94 form is stapled into the household employee's passport upon entry into the country and indicates the date up to which the household employee is authorized to stay in the country. If the household employee wishes to remain in the United States beyond the period authorized by the I-94 form, an application for extension of the I-94 form must be presented to the United States authorities. Such application must first be submitted to the United Nations Visa Committee six weeks before the date of expiration.

9.2 In the event the I-94 form in respect of the household employee is allowed to lapse, even if the G-5 visa continues to be valid, the household employee must depart the United States to apply for and obtain a new G-5 visa in her or his country of nationality.

9.3 The new G-5 visa need not be obtained in the household employee's country of nationality in the following cases:

(a) If a request for the new G-5 visa is filed on behalf of a household employee prior to the expiration of the period of authorized stay, but not approved by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service until after the period of authorized stay has expired, the household employee ordinarily will not be required to apply in his or her country of nationality;

(b) If the G-5 visa applicant has a current residence in a country other than that of his or her nationality, he or she may apply for his or her visa in that country; and

(c) If the United States does not have a visa-issuing post in the country of nationality of the G-5 visa applicant, the latter may apply in certain countries designated by the United States Department of State.

9.4 Lapse of the G-5 visa while the G-5 holder still holds a valid I-94 form will not invalidate the status of the household employee. The G-5 visa need only be renewed if the household employee plans to leave the United States and subsequently re-enter.

9.5 In order to obtain the renewal of a G-5 visa, staff members must present to the United States authorities an application for renewal of G-5 visa, accompanied by the valid I-94 form, a copy of the current employment contract between the household employee and the staff member and, upon specific request, copies of the records listed in section 6.3 above.

Section 10
Social security and taxation obligations in respect of household employees

10.1 In the absence of a totalization/social security agreement (an agreement which aims to preclude the requirement to pay into two national social security systems simultaneously) between the United States and the country from which the household employee comes, the household employee is subject to United States laws on social security and must participate in the United States Social Security Programme.

10.2 Staff members shall withhold income, social security and state taxes from their household employees and must pay them, together with their own social security contribution, to the appropriate United States tax authorities.

10.3 Senior United Nations officials at the Assistant Secretary-General level and above who are accorded diplomatic status by the United States pursuant to section 19 of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations shall, as a rule, participate in the United States Social Security Programme in respect of their household employee, unless the household employee is not a national of or a permanent resident in the United States and he or she is covered by the social security provisions in force in his or her home country or a third country.

10.4 The household employees of senior United Nations officials at the Assistant Secretary-General level and above who are exempt from participating in the United States Social Security Programme in accordance with section 10.3 above are ineligible to participate in the United States Social Security Programme on a voluntary basis.

10.5 Pursuant to article 37 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the household employees of senior United Nations officials at the Assistant Secretary-General level and above are exempt from paying income and state taxes on the emoluments they receive by reason of their household employment in the United States. The senior officials employing them must inform the United States Social Security Administration or the United States Internal Revenue Service of this

exemption when making a contribution to the United States Social Security Programme in the name of the household employee.

Section 11
Final provisions

11.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2001.

11.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/294 of 16 August 1982, entitled "Visa status of non-United States staff members serving in the United States", is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

United Nations ST/AI/2000/20

Secretariat

22 December 2000

Administrative instruction

Official travel

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, and for the purpose of implementing staff rules 107.1, 107.2, 107.3, 107.6, 107.7, 107.8, 107.9, 107.10, 107.13, 107.15, 207.1, 207.2, 207.3, 207.4, 207.5, 207.6, 207.15, 207.16, 207.17, 307.1, 307.2, 307.3 and 307.4, hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
Scope

1.1 The provisions of the present instruction shall apply to official travel of:

(a) Staff members appointed under the 100 and 200 series of the Staff Rules and their eligible family members;

(b) Staff members recruited under staff rule 301.1 (a) (i) on short-term appointments for conference and other short-term service;

(c) Staff members recruited under staff rule 301.1 (a) (ii) on appointments of limited duration, except as otherwise provided in the administrative instruction on appointments of limited duration.

1.2 When travel is authorized for individuals who are not staff members, such as consultants, individual contractors or members of committees, it shall be on the basis of the standards established for staff members by the present instruction, except where otherwise expressly provided.[1]

Section 2
Official travel of staff members and their eligible family members

2.1 Official travel may be authorized for staff members in accordance with staff rules 107.1, 207.1 and 307.1 and the conditions specified by the Secretary-General in respect of specific forms of official travel.

[1] The special rules governing payment of travel expenses and subsistence allowances in respect of members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations are contained in ST/SGB/107/Rev. 6 of 25 March 1991.

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2.2 Official travel may be authorized for eligible family members of staff appointed under the 100 and 200 series of the Staff Rules in accordance with staff rules 107.2, 107.3 and 207.2 and the conditions specified by the Secretary-General in respect of specific forms of official travel.

Section 3
Authorization for official travel

3.1 Under staff rules 107.6, 207.4 and 307.2, all official travel must be authorized in writing before it is undertaken. In exceptional cases, staff members may be orally authorized to travel. In such cases, written confirmation shall be required.

3.2 Requests for prior authorization of official travel by Secretariat officials at the level of Under-Secretary-General or Assistant Secretary-General, and by heads of mission in the field, shall be submitted to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in accordance with instructions issued by that Office. Such requests shall be made through the submission of form SG.33.

Section 4
Standard of accommodation

4.1 The standard of accommodation for official travel shall be determined in accordance with staff rules 107.10, 207.6 and 307.3, as complemented by the provisions of this section.

4.2 For official travel by air, the standard of accommodation shall be economy class, except as provided in (a) and (b) below:

(a) For Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and, where applicable, their eligible family members, the class immediately below first class shall be provided for travel on official business, on appointment, reassignment or separation, on home leave and family visit, irrespective of the duration of the particular flight. However, Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General designated to represent the Secretary-General on ceremonial occasions or to undertake missions in the exercise of the Secretary-General's good offices under the Charter of the United Nations or resolutions of the General Assembly or the Security Council may, on the approval of the Secretary-General, be provided with first-class travel accommodation, irrespective of the duration of the flight involved;

(b) For staff members below the Assistant Secretary-General level and, where applicable, their eligible family members, the class immediately below first class shall be provided for travel on official business and on appointment, assignment or separation:

(i) When the duration of a journey is nine hours or longer;

(ii) For round-trip travel, when the duration of either journey is nine hours or longer.

(c) For the purposes of (b) above, the duration of a particular journey shall be determined on the basis of the combined flying time of all legs of the journey to a given destination by the most direct and economical route available, provided the journey is not interrupted for official stops of more than one day. The flying time shall include scheduled stops for change of planes or other purposes, but shall

exclude travel time to and from airports. Up to four hours for connections between flights may be included in the flying time for the particular journey.

4.3 Air travel accommodation under the applicable standards defined by section 4.2 shall be provided at the most economical rate appropriate, including discounted airfares. The Organization shall assume responsibility for the surcharge that may be imposed after tickets have been issued if changes in the original travel plans were necessitated by the Organization or for other compelling reasons.

4.4 For official travel to missions or conferences, special arrangements may be made for group travel, in which case the provisions of section 4.2 (a) and (b) may not apply.

4.5 A standard of accommodation for air travel higher than that authorized under normally applicable rules may be approved on an exceptional basis when, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, special circumstances warrant it, such as for duly certified medical reasons. Requests for exceptions shall be submitted in writing to the Under-Secretary-General for Management well in advance of travel.

4.6 In accordance with staff rules 107.10 (f), 207.6 (b) and 307.3 (b), if a staff member or family member travels by more economical accommodation than the approved standard for the authorized destination, the United Nations shall only pay for accommodation actually used, at the rate paid by the traveller. Use of a more economical fare shall not entitle the staff member to apply any savings to any deviation from the approved itinerary nor to additional stopovers or further transportation. For travel on home leave or family visit, special arrangements may be authorized. The staff member shall be responsible for any delays, penalties or additional expenses incurred as a result of taking a lower fare or making special arrangements.

Section 5
Travel time other than on home leave or family visit

Travel time by direct route and normal mode

5.1 On travel by the most direct and economical route, either by air or by the fastest available surface mode of transportation when air travel is not feasible, actual travel time spent during a working day shall not be charged to annual leave. Neither shall annual leave be charged for a stopover authorized for rest purposes in accordance with section 5.4 (c), or for unavoidable stopovers which cannot reasonably be regarded as rest stops.

5.2 A staff member shall not be entitled to additional days of annual leave to compensate for official travel on days considered as non-working days at the staff member's duty station.

Travel time by other than direct route and normal mode

5.3 Staff members travelling for all or part of a journey by an indirect air route, or wholly or in part by surface when air transportation is the normal mode, or by other than the fastest available surface means of transportation when air travel is not feasible, shall be granted travel time not chargeable to annual leave only for the time which would have been required had the travel been undertaken by the most direct route and normal mode.

Rest periods and authorized stopovers

5.4 For travel by air or mostly by air, staff members shall be entitled to rest periods before commencing duties or a stopover for rest purposes as follows:

(a) If the scheduled time for the journey is more than 6 hours but not more than 10 hours, the staff member shall not normally be required to commence duty within 12 hours of arriving at the destination;

(b) If the scheduled time for the journey is more than 10 hours but not more than 16 hours, the staff member shall not normally be required to commence duty within 24 hours of arriving at the destination;

(c) If the scheduled time for the journey is more than 16 hours, the staff member may have one stopover for rest purposes, which shall not exceed 24 hours, at an intermediate point in the journey, with travel subsistence allowance. If the final stage of the journey is more than 6 hours, the staff member shall not normally be required to commence duty within 12 hours of arriving at the destination. As an alternative to the rest stopover, the staff member may have a rest period not exceeding 24 hours on arriving at the destination;

(d) Rest stopovers shall normally be taken in the course of an air journey. However, a rest stopover may also be taken at the end of the air portion of a journey while awaiting onward travel by another mode of transportation.

5.5 In computing the scheduled time under section 5.4, a maximum of four hours shall be allowed for each necessary waiting period between connecting flights.

Section 6
Travel time on home leave or family visit

6.1 For travel on both the outward and the return journey on home leave or family visit, staff members shall be granted a fixed amount of travel time not chargeable to annual leave, determined on the basis of the most direct flight available as follows:

(a) One day for each journey of less than 10 hours;

(b) Two days for each journey of 10 hours or longer but less than 16 hours; and

(c) Three days for each journey of 16 hours or more.

6.2. The travel time approved in accordance with section 6.1 shall include any authorized rest period or stopover made by the staff member and the time required for any additional journey to or from:

(a) The place of home leave as established under staff rules 105.3 (d) and 205.2 (c) for travel within the home country, or

(b) The place of entitlement for family visit travel when the place of entitlement is in a country other than the home country.

6.3 The fixed amount of travel time to which staff members are entitled shall be set out in the information circular on official travel issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Management.

6.4 One stopover for rest purposes, which shall not exceed 24 hours, may be authorized at an intermediate point in the journey, with travel subsistence allowance,

for journeys of 10 hours or longer for staff members travelling on home leave with children under the age of 12, when they have not availed themselves of the lump-sum option under section 10. No stopovers shall be granted in connection with family visit travel or education grant travel.

6.5 An adjustment of up to two additional days, not chargeable to annual leave, may be made if the staff member can show that the actual travel time by the most direct and fastest mode of transportation, including any authorized stopover, exceeds the approved amount of travel time. There shall be no entitlement to travel subsistence allowance for the additional days of travel time.

Section 7
Deviations from the approved route, mode of transportation or standard of accommodation

7.1 Pursuant to staff rules 107.8 (b), 207.5 (c), 207.6 (b) and 307.3 (d), when staff members are permitted to travel for their personal convenience by a route, mode of transportation or standard of accommodation other than the approved one, their entitlement in respect of a particular journey shall be limited to the maximum travel expenses and travel time to which they would have been entitled had the travel been undertaken by the approved route, mode of transportation and standard of accommodation. The maximum travel expenses shall be calculated on the basis of the most economical airfare by a direct route at the appropriate standard and rate, in accordance with section 4.

7.2 Staff members travelling by an indirect route who are otherwise eligible for a stopover shall be entitled to such stopover with appropriate travel subsistence allowance on the basis of travel time by a direct route, provided that the stopover actually made complies with the requirements of sections 5.4 (c) and 6.4 of the present instruction.

Section 8
Terminal expenses

8.1 Reimbursement of terminal expenses authorized under staff rules 107.13, 207.15 and 307.3 (a) shall be made as follows:

(a) Terminal expenses incurred for each required trip by means of public conveyance between the airport or other point of arrival or departure and the hotel or other place of dwelling shall be reimbursed in a fixed amount in respect of the staff member and, where applicable, each eligible family member authorized to travel at United Nations expense. Such fixed amounts, and any reduction applicable when an official United Nations or government vehicle is made available for the trip, shall be set out in the information circular on official travel issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Management.

(b) No expenses shall be reimbursable in respect of:

(i) An intermediate stop which is not authorized, or

(ii) An intermediate stop of less than six hours which does not involve leaving the terminal, or is exclusively for the purpose of making an onward connection.

8.2 Terminal expenses paid in accordance with section 8.1 shall be deemed to cover all expenses for transportation between the airport or other point of arrival or departure and the hotel or other place of dwelling, including transfer of baggage and other related incidental charges.

8.3 Claims for reimbursement of terminal expenses shall be made in accordance with the provisions of section 11.

Section 9
Travel advances

9.1 An advance of 100 per cent of the estimated travel subsistence allowance may be made to a staff member authorized to travel on official business. No advance shall be made in respect of other additional reimbursable expenses, such as terminal expenses under staff rules 107.13, 207.15 and 307.3 (a), or miscellaneous travel expenses under staff rules 107.19 and 207.19.

9.2 No travel advance shall be granted for travel on separation from service.

9.3 An advance of up to 75 per cent of the estimated travel subsistence allowance may be made to individuals who are not staff members, such as consultants, individual contractors or members of committees.

Section 10
Lump-sum option for travel by air on home leave, family visit or education grant travel

10.1 For travel by air on home leave, family visit or education grant travel, staff members appointed under the 100 and 200 series of the Staff Rules may opt for a lump-sum payment in lieu of all entitlements related to the particular travel by air.

10.2 The lump sum payable under this section shall amount to 75 per cent of the full economy-class fare by the least costly scheduled air carrier between the staff member's duty station and:

(a) The closest airport to the established place of entitlement for home leave or family visit travel;

(b) The established place of home leave or the educational institution, whichever is the less costly, for education grant travel.

For children entitled to reduced-fare tickets, the lump sum shall be 75 per cent of the applicable reduced fare.

10.3 By selecting the lump-sum option, a staff member agrees to waive all entitlements relating to home leave, family visit or education grant travel that would otherwise have been payable, except as provided in section 10.4. No additional payment shall be made once the option has been exercised.

10.4 The following entitlements shall not be affected by the exercise of the lump-sum option:

(a) Travel time not chargeable to annual leave shall be granted in accordance with section 6;

(b) Compensation under Appendix D to the Staff Rules, provided the travel is by a direct route between the staff member's duty station and the established place of home leave, or authorized place of family visit travel, as applicable.

10.5 The lump-sum option shall not be available on a partial basis. It must cover both the outward and the return journeys for home leave, family visit or education grant travel, and all travel related to a particular home leave by the staff member and his or her eligible family members, even when separate home leave travel has been authorized. However, when a staff member's home leave travel is combined with travel on official business, the staff member may exercise the option in respect of his or her eligible family members.

10.6 Once the lump-sum option has been selected, it shall not be possible to revert to the normal travel entitlement for the specific travel.

10.7 The Organization shall not be responsible for delays or additional expenses that may be incurred or liabilities that may arise as a result of the exercise of the lump-sum option. It is the staff member's responsibility to take out appropriate travel cancellation insurance. However, when the exigencies of service make it imperative for the staff member to postpone the home leave or family visit travel for which the lump sum was paid, the Organization shall assume responsibility for surcharges or fees that may be imposed as a result of the ticket changes, but not for any fare increase.

10.8 Staff members who wish to obtain the information necessary for them to decide whether to exercise the lump-sum option shall so inform their executive or administrative office, which will proceed in accordance with the procedures set out in the information circular on official travel issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Management and ensure that the staff member completes part B of form PT.165, "Lump-sum travel".[2]

Section 11
Travel claims

General

11.1 Staff members shall, within two calendar weeks after completion of travel other than under the lump-sum option, submit a completed travel reimbursement claim on form F.10 to their executive or administrative office, in accordance with the instructions set out in that form, including those governing the documentation to be submitted.

11.2 Recovery of travel advances through payroll deduction shall be initiated if a staff member fails to submit a duly completed F.10 form, together with the supporting documentation, within two calendar weeks after completion of travel.

11.3 If, on review of the claim, it is determined that the travel advance exceeded the amount of reimbursable travel expenses, the staff member shall be informed of the amount of overpayment, which shall be recovered through payroll deduction.

[2] Where necessary, form PT.165 may be adjusted at offices away from Headquarters.

Travel under the lump-sum option

11.4 Staff members having selected the lump-sum option under section 10 of the present instruction shall, within two calendar weeks after completion of travel, complete part C of form PT.165 and provide the certification and supporting evidence required in that form.

11.5 The entire amount of the lump sum shall be recovered through payroll deduction if the staff member fails to submit a duly completed PT.165 form and the requested documentation within two calendar weeks after completion of travel.

Section 12
Final provisions

12.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2001.

12.2 The following administrative instructions and information circulars are hereby abolished:

(a) ST/AI/133 of 8 April 1959;

(b) ST/AI/206/Rev.3 and Amend.2 of 29 February 1988 and 5 November 1992, respectively;

(c) ST/AI/249/Rev.3 of 29 March 1989;

(d) ST/AI/319 of 12 September 1984;

(e) ST/AI/381 of 24 December 1992;

(f) ST/AI/1999/10 of 29 September 1999;

(g) ST/IC/1990/13 and Amend.5 of 19 March 1990 and 28 December 1995, respectively.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

United Nations ST/AI/2000/21

Secretariat

22 December 2000

Administrative instruction

Occasional recuperation break

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1 and for the purpose of defining the terms and conditions governing occasional recuperation break, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

Purpose and definition

1.1 Staff members required to work for extended periods at special missions under hazardous, stressful and difficult conditions shall be granted regular periods of recuperation in the form of an occasional recuperation break (ORB) under the terms of the present instruction, in order to protect their health and well-being, and to ensure optimal work performance upon resumption of similar mission duties, while preserving the operational readiness of field missions.

1.2 ORB is a five-day special leave with full pay granted under staff rules 105.2, 205.3 or 305.2 to eligible staff members. To ensure that the purpose set out in section 1.1 is achieved, ORB is granted automatically once the conditions of the present instruction have been met, in order to give staff time off at regular intervals for rest and recuperation away from the mission area.

Eligibility

1.3 All internationally recruited staff members who are appointed under the 100, 200 or 300 series of the Staff Rules and staff on mission detail who have obtained international status by virtue of their mission assignment shall be eligible for ORB, provided such eligible staff members serve at a special mission or location designated for that purpose in accordance with section 2.

Section 2
Designation of special missions or specific locations within a special mission for ORB purposes

2.1 Special missions or specific locations within a special mission shall be designated for ORB purposes by the Office of Human Resources Management, after

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consultation with the substantive department or departments responsible for the mission, the United Nations Security Coordinator and the staff representatives for international staff serving in the field.

2.2 Designation of a special mission or specific location within a special mission for ORB purposes shall take into account the presence of extraordinary conditions impacting on the health, safety and well-being of staff members, including hardship, isolation, security considerations and hazardous conditions, all of which will normally be reflected in the hardship classification of duty stations located in the mission area. A hardship classification of D or E shall normally lead to designation for ORB purposes.

2.3 Such designation shall normally be made for a one-year period, and shall be subject to annual review. However, significant changes in the mission environment may result in a determination in the course of the year that the mission should, or should no longer, be designated as a special mission for ORB purposes.

2.4 Staff members shall be informed through an information circular of the list of special missions designated for ORB purposes, of any specific locations where staff may be eligible for ORB within a special mission not otherwise designated for ORB purposes, and of the effective date of that designation.

Effect of change in designation

2.5 Eligible staff already present at a mission or location within a special mission which is newly designated for ORB purposes shall start accruing qualifying service as from the effective date of the designation.

2.6 Should a special mission or location cease to be designated for ORB purposes, staff members having accrued three months of qualifying service as of the effective date of the cessation may take ORB within the following month, as provided in section 3.9. There shall be no prorating of ORB for any period shorter than three months served before the effective date of the cessation.

Section 3
ORB conditions

3.1 In order to achieve the purpose defined in section 1.1, ORB shall be granted after three months of qualifying service. ORB shall not be granted during the last month of mission service.

Qualifying service

3.2 In order to be considered as "qualifying" for ORB purposes, service at a special mission or location designated for ORB purposes must be uninterrupted by any of the following:

(a) Travel on official business, including travel for training purposes, if the staff member takes additional time off in conjunction with official travel outside the mission area, unless the official travel is within the mission area;

(b) Absence on family visit travel, home leave, family leave or special leave, or annual leave. However, annual leave of up to three consecutive working days taken in the mission area, or absence of three consecutive calendar days outside the mission area, shall not interrupt the continuity of qualifying service.

When qualifying service has been interrupted, qualifying service accrued before the interruption shall be forfeited and a new period shall begin upon return to duty of the staff member in the mission area.

3.3 Qualifying service shall not be considered interrupted when a staff member is transferred or reassigned without a break from one mission or location designated for ORB purposes to another such mission or location. In such a case, qualifying service accrued at the first mission or location may be carried forward and used at the second mission or location.

3.4 The period of qualifying service shall run from the date of arrival of the staff member at a special mission or location designated for ORB purposes, or from the date of return to such mission or location after interruption of qualifying service, or from the date of return to the mission or location after absence on ORB.

Duration of ORB absence from the mission and combination with other types of authorized absence

3.5 ORB is granted for five working days. No additional days shall be authorized as ORB for travel purposes.

3.6 Subject to the operational requirements of the mission, ORB may be taken in conjunction with weekends or official holidays. It may also be taken in conjunction with annual leave, except when such leave is taken for home leave or family visit travel, as provided in section 3.8 (a) below.

3.7 Unless ORB is combined with annual leave as provided by section 3.6, the maximum absence from the mission area on each ORB period shall not exceed 10 calendar days, including weekends and official holidays.

3.8 ORB may not be combined with any of the following:

(a) Official travel, including for official business, training, home leave and family visit. Should such combination occur after the approval or commencement of ORB, all days previously authorized as ORB shall be charged to annual leave;

(b) Emergency leave, sick leave or family leave. Should such combination occur after the approval or commencement of ORB, all days previously authorized as ORB shall be charged to annual leave, sick leave or family leave, as appropriate;

(c) Travel on departure from the mission area at the end of the staff member's appointment or mission assignment, unless the staff member is transferred or reassigned without a break to another special mission designated for ORB purposes under section 2, in which case he or she may take ORB for a period not exceeding five working days, with a maximum period of absence of 10 days, as provided by section 3.7. A longer period of absence shall result in all days previously authorized for ORB purposes being charged to annual leave.

ORB timing

3.9 In order to achieve its purpose, ORB must be taken within one month following completion of the period of qualifying service and shall be forfeited if the staff member elects not to take ORB within the prescribed period. Should exigencies of service, as determined by the head of administration at the mission, make it impossible for a staff member to take ORB within that period, ORB may be taken

during the following month on an exceptional basis, after which the entitlement to ORB for the particular qualifying period shall no longer exist.

3.10 ORB may not be carried forward from one qualifying period to the next, or combined with a subsequent ORB.

3.11 In view of the strict time constraints during which ORB may be taken, each mission is required to plan allocation of its human resources accordingly. In particular, each mission shall make the necessary arrangements to ensure that:

(a) Staff members are able to avail themselves at the appropriate intervals of their ORB and annual leave entitlements;

(b) The office is appropriately covered within existing resources during the period of the staff member's absence on ORB; and

(c) No exception is made to any of the conditions governing ORB, as set out in sections 3.1 to 3.10.

Location of ORB

3.12 ORB shall normally be taken outside the mission area. At the staff member's request, however, the head of administration at the mission may approve ORB to destinations within the mission area, provided such destinations have a hardship classification level of A or B.

Relationship of ORB with other entitlements

3.13 Staff members shall be on full pay status while on ORB. Entitlement to mission subsistence allowance for the period shall be subject to the provisions of ST/AI/1997/6.

3.14 ORB does not affect the periodicity or accrual of any other travel or leave entitlement. However, travel outside the mission area on annual leave, home leave or family visit travel shall not be authorized until at least one month after return from ORB.

3.15 Travel costs when travelling on ORB shall be the exclusive responsibility of the staff member. However, in those missions where United Nations has means of transport arranged for official purposes, every effort shall be made to facilitate the use of such transport by staff members leaving or coming back to the mission area on ORB, at no cost or minimal cost, on a "non-interference space available" basis.

Section 4
Special ORB due to extraordinary additional workload

4.1 Notwithstanding the requirement of section 1.3 above that eligible staff members serve at a special mission or location designated for ORB purposes, a special ORB shall be granted on an individual basis at other missions or locations to eligible staff members provided the requirements set out in sections 4.2 to 4.6 are met.

Advance determination that special ORB may be granted at a mission not otherwise designated for ORB purposes

4.2 Before any special ORB may be granted, the head of administration at the mission concerned shall be required to make a preliminary determination that there will be extraordinary additional work that may justify special ORB, such as the start-up, expansion or liquidation of a mission, the launching of special projects or a specified period of election registration and observation. The determination shall not become effective until it is endorsed by the head of the department or office at Headquarters which is responsible for the mission concerned, and may not apply retroactively.

Conditions for special ORB

4.3 After it has been determined that special ORB may be granted at a mission not otherwise designated for ORB purposes, special ORB may be granted to staff members who have worked 10 full days over and above the mission's official working days during a three-month period of qualifying service as defined in section 3.2, provided such work was approved in advance by the head of administration at the mission, on recommendation of the staff member's Chief of Section.

4.4 The 10 days required under section 4.3 may be accrued in full-day or half-day increments during the weekend or any official holiday. Additional hours worked which do not amount to a full or a half working day shall not be counted towards qualification for special ORB.

4.5 Qualifying service accrued for purposes of special ORB may not be carried forward or used in another mission or location.

4.6 ORB conditions set out in sections 3.5 to 3.15 of the present instruction shall also apply to special ORB.

Certification and reporting requirements

4.7 Special ORB may be granted only upon written certification by the staff member's immediate supervisor and Chief of Section that the staff member was required to report to work on each of the additional days, and that the staff member did, in fact, work the additional time over a three-month period of qualifying service. Every supervisor and Chief of Section shall be personally accountable for the accuracy of their certification.

4.8 The head of administration at the mission shall report on a quarterly basis to the head of the department or office at Headquarters which is responsible for the mission concerned on all special ORBs granted to individual staff members.

Section 5
Final provisions

5.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2001.

5.2 Internal guidelines and practices followed locally before the issuance of the present instruction to afford compensatory time off and/or rest and recuperation to staff members serving at special missions shall be discontinued. The present instruction replaces and abolishes any previous ORB guidelines, all prior policies and regimes of supplementary and/or ad hoc provisions and informal local

arrangements concerning leave granted for rest and recuperation to internationally recruited staff.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management